

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT M 00149 310043Z

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ACTION EA-14

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R 302355Z AUG 74

FM AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0080

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT MORESBY 0149

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV, PFOR, PGOV, PP

SUBJ: AUSTRALIAN VIEWS ON POLITICAL SCENE

1. AUSTRALIAN OFFICE CONSELOR JOHN HOLLOWAY TOLD ME AUGUST 27 THAT CHIEF MINISTER SOMARE HAD THE VOTES NECESSARY TO PASS HIS VERSION OF THE CONSTITUTION DURING THE AUGUST SESSION BUT DECIDED THAT MORE PERSUASION AND DISCUSSION WAS NEEDED TO ALLAY THE APPREHENSIONS OF SOME MEMBERS. SOMARE WILL MANEUVER BEHIND THE SCENES PRIOR TO OPENING OF NEXT SESSION ON SEPTEMBER 23 IN HOPES OF INCREASING THE SUPPORT FOR HIS VERSION. ACCORDING TO HOLLOWAY, SOMARE HOPES TO GET CONSTITUTION (OR AT LEAST DRAFT OUTLINE) THROUGH THE HOUSE IN THE SEPTEMBER SESSION. (HOLLOWAY THINKS THIS EXPECTATION IS OPTIMISTIC, AND WE AGREE.)

2. HOLLOWAY THINKS THAT A REALIGNMENT OF VOTES HAS ALREADY TAKEN PLACE FOR THE PURPOSE OF VOTING ON THE CONSTITUTION BUT HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THIS WILL BE A PERMANENT (OR EVEN SEMI-PERMANENT) REALIGNMENT OF PARTIES. DIFFERENCES, ESPECIALLY ON ECONOMIC ISSUES, ARE TOO GREAT FOR UNITED PARTY TO GO ALONG WITH PANGU. AUSTRALIANS SHARE EXPECTATION THAT SOMARE WILL
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PAGE 02 PORT M 00149 310043Z

GIVE JUSTICE PORTFOLIO BACK TO KAPUTIN (NOW MINISTER WITHOUT

PORTFOLIO), THUS DEFUSING THAT ISSUE.

3. COMMENT: I HAVE HEARD FREQUENT PREDICTIONS OF GENERAL RE-ALIGNMENT OF PARTIES DURING MY TWO MONTHS HERE. THUS FAR THE ONLY CHANGE HAS BEEN THE SHAKY EMERGENCE OF THE COUNTRY PARTY. ANY FURTHER CHANGE WILL HAVE TO AWAIT RESUMPTION OF HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY SESSION IN LATE SEPTEMBER, AND BY THAT TIME SOMARE HOPES OBTAIN AGREEMENT ON THE CONSTITUTION AND WILL PROBABLY HAVE THE KAPUTIN MATTER BEHIND HIM. DONALD HOOK OF ABC TOLD ME AUGUST 22 MOMIS (HEAD OF CONSTITUTIONAL FACTION) AND SOMARE ARE STILL ON GOOD TERMS PERSONALLY AND THAT THEIR IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES ARE NARROWING. THIS WAS BASED ON LAND MOMIS/HOOK CONVERSATION PREVIOUS EVENING. HOWEVER, WE CANNOT OVEREMPHASIZE THE FLUIDITY OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION HERE.

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